A 1490. d. 53

A POSITION AND TESTIMONY AGAINST All Swearing UNDER THE GOSPEL.

In which may be ſeen,

I. That Chriſt hath forbidden all ſorts of Oaths.

II. What Chriſt hath ſubſtituted inſtead of an Oath.

III. Reaſons for that Prohibition and Subſtitution.

With an Anſwer to all the material Objections that are, or may be, alledged from the Scriptures.

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John Fisher
F 1009 1 only

To the READER.

CONſidering the Teſtimonies and Sufferings of ſeveral Chriſtians and conſcientious Perſons formerly, againſt all Swearing; and now obſerving of late, that not only the Lawfulneſs of Oaths themſelves has been diſputed and pleaded for, as by the Athenians and others, but alſo the Definition and Nature of an Oath; and what an Oath is and what not, have been ſtarted and took notice of more than formerly; and alſo conſidering, on one ſide, of the abounding of Swearing and deteſtable Oaths, among many in this Nation, enough to draw down Judgments and divine Vengeance upon it, as have been lately, for an Example, in other places beyond the Seas; and alſo, on the other ſide, obſerving the Moderation of many, and that in Authority too, in Condeſcention to a People that have formerly ſuffered, becauſe they durſt not Swear at all. I could not be eaſy in my mind, until I had Written and Publiſh'd this to the World, hoping it may be of ſome uſe and ſervice to moſt, if not all Men. As firſt to the common and prophane Swearers, that now ſo much abound upon the Earth, by ſhewing ſuch the great danger

danger they hazard thereby to their Souls (beſides the Judgments in general they may draw down upon themſelves and others in the Land) And, Secondly, to ſuch as are in Authority, by propoſing and demonſtrating to them, by evident Reaſons and eminent Authorities, the danger of impoſing Oaths, or any higher Aſſeverations or Expreſſions (inſtead thereof) than plain and ſimple Speech; which I deſire all moderate Magiſtrates, that love and truly affect Liberty of Conſcience *(for whom I have great Reſpect and Affection) ſeriouſly to conſider of. And, Thirdly, to thoſe that conſcientiouſly ſcruple any Oath, by ſhewing ſuch the danger of venturing to uſe, inſtead of an Oath, any higher form or manner of Speech, than Chriſt hath preſcribed and allowed them, leſt they be drawn into an Oath unawares. So wiſhing and deſiring the good of every one, and that the common Swearers may leave off Swearing, and the legal or more ſolemn Swearers be ſatisfied with Evangelical Truth ſpeaking, and thoſe that are come to ſuch Truth ſpeaking, may never look back from the ſimplicity of that Teſtimony: I remain a Friend to all, eſpecially the moderate, ſincere and ingenuous, of what Profeſſion or Perſuaſion ſoever they may be.*

Philothrenes.

The

The Poſition.

No Man ought to Swear (under the Goſpel-diſpenſation) any kind of Oath, in any Caſe; neither by reaſon of any Command from a lawful Magiſtrate; nor upon any other occaſion or reſpect whatſoever; for theſe following Reaſons.

I. BECAUSE Chriſt Jeſus, whom all Men ought to obey, and fear to break his Commands, hath commanded, *Not to Swear at all*, Mat. 5. 34. and inſtead thereof, in Verſe 37. commands, *That our Speech be Yea, yea; and Nay, nay*; and ſaith, *That whatſoever is more than theſe, cometh of evil.* Now any Oath is more than theſe; and there-

fore being alſo forbad before, it muſt be of evil.

II. In *Mat.* 18. 16. in Caſe of Treſpaſs, where Evidences of Witneſſes is required, Chriſt's Command is, *That in the Mouth of two or three Witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed:* And not by the Oath of two or three Witneſſes; nor yet in the Mouth of two or three Swearers.

III. In *James* 5. 12. The Apoſtle commands, *Above all things not to Swear, neither by Heaven, nor by Earth, nor by any other Oath;* but inſtead thereof bids, *That our yea, be yea, and our nay, nay; leſt ye fall into condemnation.* Here the Apoſtle *James* is alſo very expreſs to the purpoſe, agreeing with Chriſt's Command before in *Mat.* 5. 34. Therefore he that Swears any Oath, does quite contrary to the Apoſtle's expreſs Command, and muſt hazard Condemnation.

IV. A true Chriſtian's Oath is needleſs; becauſe ſuch an one dare no more tell a Lie, than he dare to Forſwear himſelf (if he ſhould Swear:) And an evil Man's or falſe Chriſtian's Oath, is worthy of no more Credit than a Lier; becauſe he that dares to break his Word or be a falſe Witneſs, in a ſolemn affirming or denying of any thing, has no fear of God nor awe upon his Conſcience; and therefore, what ſhould make

ſuch

ſuch an one fear or ſcruple to break his Oath, if he Swears? Therefore, now, to what purpoſe is the uſe of Oaths or Swearing, among thoſe that profeſs Chriſtianity?

OBJECTIONS.

Objection 1. In *Deut.* 6. 13. and in 10. 20. *God commanded to Swear by his Name*; therefore Chriſt did not forbid ſuch Oaths as was by the Name of God; for the Father and the Son are one, and Immutable (or unchangeable) in their Nature and Will; and therefore how could the Son forbid that which the Father had commanded?

Anſwer, That Command of God was to them that were under the Law, to prevent them from ſwearing by Idols; and not to ſuch that are under the Goſpel, to whom Chriſt ſpoke: And therefore this proves no contrariety between the Father and the Son, any more than the Sons taking away the firſt Things, that were commanded by God under the Law, that he might eſtabliſh the ſecond, which he himſelf commanded under the Goſpel, as in *Heb.* 10. 9. See alſo in *Heb.* 7. 12, 18. and 8. 13.

Object. 2. In *Iſaiah* 19. 18. In a Prophecy relating to Goſpel times, as ſeems manifeſt from Verſe 20. it is ſaid, *That five Cities*

in the Land of Egypt ſhall ſpeak the Language of Canaan, and Swear by the Lord of Hoſts; therefore how can Swearing, by the Lord of Hoſts, be forbidden by Chriſt in Goſpel times?

Anſw. If Swearing by the Lord of Hoſts be here propheſied of to be in Goſpel times, then by the ſame Reaſon from Verſe 21. to do Sacrifice and Oblation, muſt be alſo in Goſpel times, as is there ſaid the Egyptians ſhall do; and if ſo, how is the old Teſtament, wherein were the Sacrifices and Oblations, abrogated and diſannulled when the new Teſtament came? As in *Heb.* 8. 13.

Object. 3. In *Iſa.* 45. 23. The Lord ſpeaking concerning ſuch times, as wherein all the ends of the Earth ſhall be ſaved (which ſurely muſt be in Goſpel times) ſaid, *That every Knee ſhall bow to me, and every Tongue ſhall Swear*: Therefore ſome Swearing muſt be lawful in Goſpel times.

Anſw. The Apoſtle *Paul*, in *Rom.* 14. 11. who, without doubt, knew how to interpret this Prophecy, yet he would not expreſs it in ſuch Terms as might contradict Chriſt's general Prohibition to Swear in *Mat.* 5. 34. therefore he words it thus, *Every Knee ſhall bow to me, and every Tongue ſhall confeſs to God*: Here the Apoſtle hath changed the word Swear, that was figuratively ſpoken in the

the time of the Law, into Confeſs, in which it was to be fulfilled in the time of the Goſpel. Therefore now it may be evident from hence, that no Sentence or Prophecy ſpoken by the Prophets, tho' expreſſed in *Moſaical* Terms, or in ſuch Terms as were under the Law, ought to be expounded in any wiſe, to contradict any of Chriſt's general Commands or Prohibitions; but on the contrary, they muſt be expreſſed in Goſpel Terms, that agree therewith; as is manifeſt by the Apoſtle's Example aforeſaid.

Object. 4. In *Iſa.* 65. 16. In a Prophecy relating to ſuch times wherein new Heavens and a new Earth ſhall be created (which muſt be in the laſt times) it is ſaid, *He that Sweareth in the Earth, ſhall Swear by the true God*: Therefore it is lawful in the laſt times, which are under the Goſpel, to Swear by the true God.

Anſw. If according to the Apoſtle *Paul's* Example, before noted in *Rom.* 14. 11. we change the word [Swear] by the true God, unto [Confeſs] unto the true God, we may interpret it right, and in Goſpel terms, and then we ſhall not make the Prophet ſeem to contradict Chriſt, in *Mat.* 5. 34. who is Lord of all the Prophets, Apoſtles and Angels, *And whom we are eſpecially to hear and obey in all things*, Act. 3. 22. *And alſo to*

confeſs to *him*, Phil. 2. 10. And therefore if there ſhould ſeem at any time a diſagreement between the Sayings of Chriſt and the Prophets, or the Apoſtles either, Chriſt's Sayings ought not be ſtrained to comply with theirs (who were his Servants) but on the contrary, their Sayings muſt yield and comply to his, who is their Lord, and whom we ought eſpecially to hear and obey in all things, as aforeſaid.

Object. 5. In *Jerem.* 12. 16, 17. it is ſaid, concerning the Gentiles, *That if they will learn the ways of my People, to Swear by my Name (the Lord liveth, as they taught my People to Swear by Baal) then ſhall they be built in the midſt of my People; But if they will not obey, then will I utterly pluck up and deſtroy that Nation, ſaith the Lord.* Now here is a Promiſe of Acceptance to thoſe that will learn to Swear by God's Name, and a Threatning of utter Deſtruction to ſuch as will not; therefore, now, how dare any refuſe to Swear by the Name of God, upon a ſolemn and a lawful Account?

Anſw. This was ſpoken under the Law, wherein Swearing was; and though it was ſpoken to the Gentiles, yet it was to ſuch Gentiles as taught *Iſrael* to Swear by *Baal*; and which muſt be in *Baal*'s time, that was long before the Goſpel times: Therefore

Therefore what is this to Chriſtians under the Goſpel? But if it could be proved that this Prophecy did relate to the Gentiles under the Goſpel, then, according to *Paul*'s Expoſition of the word Swear under the Goſpel diſpenſation, it muſt be expounded, that they muſt learn the ways of his People to Confeſs to his Name, and that he liveth; which is the duty of all Chriſtians to do, as in *Mat.* 10. 32. *Rom.* 10. 9, 10. and 14. 11.

Object. 6. If Chriſt's Prohibition to Swear be ſo general, that no Oath is lawful to Swear, in any Caſe, under the Goſpel; why did the Apoſtle in *Heb.* 6. 16. ſay, *For Men verily Swear by the greater, and an Oath for Confirmation is to them an end of all Strife*?

Anſw. The Apoſtle ſpoke of ſuch Men as were under the Law, and by way of Similitude why they uſed an Oath, in ſuch times as God confirmed his Promiſe to *Abraham* by an Oath: Now here is no Command in theſe words of the Apoſtle for Men to Swear; nor any more tolleration for Men to Swear any Oath, that live according to the Goſpel, than there is tolleration in *Jam.* 3. 9. for any to Curſe Men, becauſe the Apoſtle there ſaith, *With the Tongue we bleſs Men, and therewith curſe we Men; yet this ought not ſo to be*; as is manifeſt in the next Verſe.

Object. 7. If Chriſt's Saying in *Mat.* 5.

37. *Whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of evil*, proves all Oaths to be evil, becauſe they are more than barely Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; how is it that God hath Sworn himſelf, and commanded Men to Swear, as in *Gen.* 22. 16. *Deut.* 16. 13? Surely God never did, or commanded any thing that came from evil.

Anſw. The doing of any thing after Chriſt hath forbidden it, is from evil, though not before; becauſe the breaking of Chriſt's Command is from evil, and from the Devil; for none elſe will tempt any one ſo to do (except ſuch as are his Servants and obey him.) Under the Law, God allowed an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth, which then could not come from evil, becauſe God never allowed any thing that came from evil; but after Chriſt had forbidden this, with other things that were allowed under the Law, and commanded the contrary inſtead thereof, the breaking of his Command cometh of evil, and from the Devil that tempts Men thereunto.

Object. 8. If all Oaths are forbidden by Chriſt, and accounted then to be from evil; how could the Angel have Sworn, in *Rev.* 10. 6? Which was after Chriſt's Prohibition, in *Mat.* 5. 34.

Anſw. That Angel had a peculiar Commiſſion that extended through the Law and the Prophets, wherein Swearing was, and

ſpoke

ſpoke as God's Repreſentative or Ambaſſador (which would be a preſumption for Men to imitate;) for as God aforetime confirmed his Promiſe unto *Abraham*, and to his whole Seed, by an Oath, *Gen.* 22. 16, ſo again by his Angel in *Rev.* 10. 6, 7. he ſeems in like manner (as by an Oath) to confirm the ſame Promiſe, that it ſhould then quickly be fulfilled, *viz.* that Time ſhould be no longer; but that the Myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, as he had declared to his Servants the Prophets; therefore that was no Example for us to follow. However, if any ſhall ſtill think this Anſwer not ſufficient or full enough to the Matter, let it be further conſidered, That we read no where that Chriſt forbad Angels to Swear; but he plainly commanded Men not to Swear at all: So the evil lies in breaking Chriſt's Command, and in Men that ſo do, to whom his Command extended.

Object. 9. Chriſt in *Mat.* 5. 34. forbad only ſuch Oaths as are made by the Creatures, as by Heaven, Earth, *&c.* becauſe he enumerates and mentions ſome ſuch created things, and all vain and raſh Oaths in familiar Diſcourſe; becauſe he ſaith, in Verſe 37. *Let your Communication be Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; and whatſoever is more than theſe* (viz. in our Communication) *cometh of evil.*

Anſw.

Anſw. To Swear by the Creatures was forbidden in the Law, becauſe then none ought to Swear by any thing but by the Name of God; and to Swear by God's Name, in common Diſcourſe, is a taking of his Name in vain: But Chriſt, in the firſt place, before he mentioned any Creature, forbad ſuch Oaths as were to be performed unto the Lord, in old time that was under the Law; which ſurely were not by any Creature; but by his Name; nor yet vain and raſh Oaths, for ſuch were never commanded to be performed unto the Lord. Moreover Chriſt forbad Swearing by God the Creator, when he forbad Swearing by Heaven, Earth, *&c.* becauſe he gives that for the Reaſon why we ſhould not Swear by theſe Creatures, (*viz.*) becauſe Heaven is the Throne of God, and the Earth is his Footſtool; and none can Swear by the Throne of God, but he muſt Swear by his Creator that ſits thereon; as is manifeſt in *Mat.* 23. 22.

Object. 10. If no kind of Oath be lawful to Swear; why did the Apoſtle *Paul* uſe ſuch a form of Oath, in 1 *Cor.* 15. 31. as in ſaying, *I proteſt, by your rejoycing, I die daily?*

Anſw. There is no word for I proteſt in the Greek: Moreover if theſe words could be made an Oath, then the Apoſtle muſt of neceſſity

neceſſity have Sworn by their Rejoycing, and ſo by a Creature which was always unlawful; and therefore this cannot be accounted an Oath, without reflecting upon the Apoſtle as a Tranſgreſſor, both againſt the Law and Goſpel.

Object. 11. If no Oath muſt be uſed, in any Caſe; how can Juſtice be adminiſtred according to the Rule of the Goſpel (*viz.*) by the Teſtimony of two or three Witneſſes, *Mat.* 18. 16. in many Caſes where there is but one ſingle Witneſs, by which the Controverſy can be decided? As for Example, in one Caſe inſtanced in *Exod.* 22. 10, 11. *If a Man deliver unto his Neighbour an Aſs, or an Ox, or a Sheep, or any Beaſt to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no Man ſeeing it: Then ſhall an Oath of the Lord be between them both, that he hath not put his hand to his Neighbours Goods; and the Owner of it ſhall accept thereof, and he ſhall not make it good.* Now if in this, or ſuch a Caſe, the Man's bare word be taken for the Proof of his Innocency, the Controverſy will be decided by one only Witneſs, directly againſt Chriſt's Precept in *Mat.* 18. 16. *That in the Mouth of two or three Witneſſes every word may be eſtabliſhed.* Therefore, in ſuch Caſe, the guiltleſs Party muſt take in God to Witneſs with him (*viz.* by his Oath) that ſo the Matter

Matter may be decided by two Witneſſes, at leaſt, according to Chriſt's Precept aforeſaid, to wit, by him that makes the Oath, and by God, whom he calls to Witneſs with him.

Anſw. In ſuch a Caſe if a Man doth Swear, and call God to Witneſs with him unto the Matter, yet this will not make it to be decided according to Chriſt's Precept; for Chriſt ſaith, Take with thee one or two more; that in the Mouth of two or three Witneſſes, every word may be eſtabliſhed. Now the one or two more, beſides himſelf, muſt be humane Perſons, and not Gods; except the Party can call two Gods to witneſs with him, which is abſurd to ſuppoſe; and alſo, in ſuch a Caſe, where there is two or three Witneſſes, it may be decided by Chriſt's Rule, without their Oaths: Therefore Chriſt's Rule, to have two or three Witneſſes, extends only to ſuch Caſes as is poſſible to have ſo many Witneſſes, and lays no neceſſity upon Swearing to the deciding thereof, according to, or by, his Precept. And, moreover, if one Swearing, calls God to witneſs with him; how is the Matter in Controverſy decided, by the Mouth of two Witneſſes, according to Chriſt's Precept, when only by the Mouth of one Man, every word is ſpoken, to teſtify the truth in queſtion

queſtion? For if God ſhould teſtify or reveal the truth of ſuch a Matter in queſtion immediately by his own Mouth, there would be no need of any Man's Teſtimony to ſtrengthen his Evidence; becauſe no Man can add any thing to Gods immediate Revelation or Teſtimony, which is perfect of its ſelf.

Object. 12. If Chriſt's Prohibition to Swear in *Mat.* 5. 34. be ſo general, that it admits of no limit or exception to the Sentence, ſo that none ought to Swear, in any Caſe, becauſe the words are general; then, by the ſame Reaſon, none can lay up for himſelf any Treaſure on Earth, nor take thought for his Life what to eat or drink, *&c.* nor yet take thought (or care) for the Morrow, in any caſe, without breaking ſome other of Chriſt's expreſs Commands in the ſame Sermon, as in *Mat.* 6. 19. 25. 34. all which are as general as that againſt Swearing, in *Mat.* 5. 34. and then if it be ſo; how can any be induſtrious in their Imployments and Trades, and take care to provide for their Families; which he that doth not is worſe than an Infidel, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8? Therefore for any Perſons to put ſuch a general and unlimited Conſtruction on any of Chriſt's Commands, when, according to ſuch of their own unlimited ſenſe, they themſelves are daily guilty of breaking ſome other of Chriſt's

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Commands, and ſo condemn or diſſallow that in one Caſe which they do and muſt of neceſſity allow in another Caſe, is ridiculous and great diſingenuity and confuſion.

Anſw. Chriſt forbidding us to lay up Treaſures for our ſelves on Earth, *&c.* extends only to ſuch laying up earthly Treaſure as to ſet our Hearts on it; for our Hearts ought only to be with our heavenly Treaſure, as is manifeſt from Verſe 20, 21. Therefore, if any one can lay up things on Earth, where his Heart is not with them, Chriſt's Command extends not to him, becauſe ſuch things are not properly his Treaſure; for the word Treaſure moſt properly ſignifies, that which is moſt precious in his eſteem. Likewiſe, Chriſt forbidding us to take thought (or care) for our Lives, *&c.* and for the Morrow, is not to be anxious or too much careful, or diſtracted or over-troubled in ones mind about them (which is alſo a ſetting our Hearts upon them) for ſo the words in the Greek μεριμνᾶτε and μεριμνήσει, properly ſignify; and therefore theſe Prohibitions are not ſo general, as that in *Mat.* 5. 34. concerning Swearing, which is alſo as full againſt all Oaths whatſoever, both in the Greek and Latin as in the Engliſh: However if it ſhould be granted (for Argument ſake) that thoſe Prohibitions aforeſaid, are as general in all Caſes

as

as that of Swearing; yet this will not prove that of Swearing any whit the leſs general, nor that any Perſon ought to commit Sin, in breaking a Command of Chriſt's in any one thing, becauſe they may do ſo in ſome other things; but rather ſuch ought to repent and leave off thoſe things wherein they do, or have broke his Commands (if it plainly ſo appears) and be more careful afterwards of keeping all his Commands. But if it be impartially and ingenuouſly conſidered, there is but little ſign that thoſe Perſons are very careful of laying up for themſelves Treaſures on Earth, or taking thought for their Lives, or for the Morrow, who hazard the loſing of all their earthly Things and Enjoyments, and their Lives and Liberty too, becauſe they dare not do that, which they believe, will be a breaking of Chriſt's Command, as aforeſaid.

Object. 13. If all Oaths are forbidden by Chriſt in *Mat.* 5. 34. how could the Apoſtle *Paul* (who without queſtion) underſtood the extent of Chriſt's words, and would not do any thing contrary thereunto, ſo often call God to witneſs to the Truth of what he ſaid (which is a formal Oath) as *God is my Witneſs*, Rom. 1. 9? *I call God for a Record upon my Soul*, 2 Cor. 1. 23. *Before God, I lie not*, Gal. 1. 20. *God is my Record*, Phil. 1. 8.

Ye

Ye are Witneſſes, and God alſo, 1 Theſ. 2. 10. *I ſay the truth in Chriſt, I lie not; my Conſcience alſo bearing me Witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt,* Rom. 9. 1.

Anſw. If ſimply the ſaying God, or any thing elſe, is my Witneſs; or only the meer calling God, or any Creature for a Witneſs or Record, *&c.* on any Account, be a formal Oath, then *Paul* Swore by the Men he wrote to, in 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10. as well as by God, when he ſaid, Ye are Witneſſes; and God alſo. And by the ſame Reaſon he Swore by his Conſcience in *Rom.* 9. 1. when he ſaid, My Conſcience alſo bearing me Witneſs, *&c.* And alſo by the like Reaſon, *Moſes* Swore by Heaven and Earth, in *Deut.* 41. 26. when he ſaid to the People, I call Heaven and Earth to Witneſs againſt you this day: All which would render *Paul* and *Moſes* too, to Swear by the Creatures; which thoſe that plead againſt the univerſality of Chriſt's Prohibition themſelves, confeſs, were always unlawful, and a breach of Chriſt's Command in the Goſpel, and alſo of *God*'s Command under the Law; when he permitted Men to Swear only by his Name, according to their own Explication and Interpretation of them.

So if ſuch Expreſſions could be proved Oaths, it is manifeſt that we ought not to imi-

imitate them for the Reaſons aforeſaid; neither are ſuch Examples of the Prophets and Apoſtles ſufficient or enough then, to invalidate to us now the Command of Chriſt, for the aboliſhing all Swearing, no more than *Paul*'s then ſhaving his Head at *Cenchrea*, becauſe he had a Vow, *Acts* 18. 18. or his purifying himſelf in the Temple, and offering with the four Jews that had a Vow, *Acts* 21. 26. or his circumciſing of *Timothy* becauſe of the Jews, *Acts* 16. 3. can warrant us to the Obſervation of thoſe legal Rites and Ceremonies now; nor indeed ought we to imitate the Prophets or Apoſtles in any particular thing, without having any Warrant or Precept to us for the ſame, eſpecially when it ſeems againſt any general and poſitive Command in Scripture, and moſt eſpecially when it ſeems directly againſt any poſitive Command or Prohibition of Chriſt, who is Lord of all the Prophets, Apoſtles and Angels, and whom we are eſpecially to hear and obey in all things, *Acts* 3. 32. for though they were exemplary for us to imitate and follow, yet it muſt be in ſuch things that we are ſure they were followers of Chriſt, and that are alike binding to all Chriſtians, according to the Apoſtle *Paul*'s own Exhortation, in 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. and not otherwiſe, as in *Gal.* 1. 8, 9.

But however, to find a better Expoſition of the Expreſſions, ſuppoſed to be Oaths afore-mentioned, than to make the Apoſtle and Prophets tranſgreſſours, as aforeſaid, let it be ſeriouſly obſerved what the Definition or Nature and Subſtance of an Oath is, which I here propoſe to all Men, as well to the Ingenious and Learned, as to the Unlearned, to conſider of, with my Reaſons hereafter following.

An Oath, or the Subſtance of an Oath, is a Religious Tye, or a Sacred Bond, when it is given for a Temporal or Earthly Thing: As the beſeeching or invoking of God, or any thing reverenced and eſteemed for a Deity, or the expreſſing or naming any ſuperiour thing as a Surety, that moſt properly belongs to God, which is not in any Man's power to diſpoſe of, and thereby binding the Soul as a Pawn or Pledge for a Security to an Inferior, for confirming the truth of any Human or Temporal Matter in queſtion is a Swearing.

And this is alſo confirmed by the Original, or Etymology of the Word *Juro*, to Swear, from the beſt Authorities, *viz. Juro ex Jure vel quaſi Jovem Oro, aut teſtem invoco—— Quod jurare proprie ſit ita ſancte promittere ac ſi jus eſſet.—— Seu juris ſervandi cauſa religioſe aſſevero.* By which it ſeems, that Swearing

ing being firſt among the Heathens, was an invoking or uſing the Name of their God (or that which they reverenced as a Deity) for a Bond-tye or Security of their Affirmations and Promiſes, whereby they bound their Soul to their Idol as a Pledge, for the truth and certainty thereof; ſo likewiſe when the *Iſraelites* were permitted to Swear by the true God, only for a time, to draw them off from their Idols; they, by the ſame reaſon, bound their Souls to him as a Pledge for a Security (which was better than to be bound to an Idol). And alſo by the Latin definition of the word *Juramentum*; *viz. Juramentum eſt aliquod mente Juratur.* An Oath is a bond or ſecurity of ſomething underſtood in the Mind, binding the Soul and implying a Curſe, in caſe of not then ſpeaking the truth, though not perhaps ſo plainly expreſſed in Words at length, as it is but in few Oaths.

And this ſeems further manifeſt, from *Mat.* 5. 34, 35, 36. where Chriſt gives ſome reaſon why they ſhould not Swear by Heaven, Earth, nor *Jeruſalem*, *viz.* becauſe one was God's Throne, and the other his Footſtool, and the laſt his City; and none could Swear by any of theſe Creatures, that moſt properly belonged to God, but he muſt Swear by the Creator, as is plain from *Mat.* 23. 22.

He that Swears by Heaven Swears by the Throne of God, and by him that ſits thereon: So here is a Swearing by God implied, and conſequently a binding the Soul, when only Heaven and a Creature is uſed or mentioned to Swear by; the like Reaſon is, when one Swears by his Head, becauſe our Head and Body too are none of our own, but the Lords, *Rom.* 14. 8. and ſo properly belong to God. And, therefore, this is plain to all Men, That none ought, in any Caſe, to aſſign that for a Surety, Pawn or Pledge (tho' but an Earthly one, and much more a greater and higher) which is anothers and none of their own; nor that any one can lawfully give any thing which is not in his power to diſpoſe of.

And ſo now ſeeing the nature of an Oath is ſuch a binding of the Soul, for a Pawn or Pledge in temporal Affairs; was there not great reaſon why Chriſt diſcontinued the uſe of them, among Chriſtians, by his Prohibition in *Mat.* 5. 34? For let it be conſidered, whether it would not be an unreaſonable thing for any one to pawn his Soul for, or upon, any temporal matter, where there is no viſible or intelligible proportion between the value of the Pawn or Pledge, and of the thing it was pawned for? And alſo, would it not be a dangerous thing to run ſuch a great

great hazard, in caſe of any miſtake, as human Senſe and Underſtanding is ſubject to, (tho' not deſignedly) as is frequently ſeen among thoſe that Swear in Courts and before Magiſtrates, notwithſtanding the Bond of their Oaths? And, alſo, might not this be one Reaſon too, why the Apoſtle *James* commanded the Brethren, That, above all things, they ſhould not Swear, ſeeing it is one of the moſt dangerous of all things, for any one ſo ſlightly to put his Soul into ſuch a hazard, (like laying ones Soul for a Wager) by his own conſent and agreement? And would not all eſteem it a very unreaſonable thing of any Man that ſhould require a thouſand Pounds for a Pledge or Pawn, for any thing but of the value of a Shilling? And yet this would be far ſhort of the Proportion of the value of a Soul, to any earthly temporal Matter. And doth it not alſo ſhew, that ſuch as will give ſuch an extraordinary Pledge for a ſmall and trivial matter (in compariſon of the Pledge) when duly conſidered, eſteem but lightly of their Souls, or of what they Pawn; as *Eſau* did, when he ſold his Birth-right for a Meſs of Pottage?

And to prove that a Surety, Pawn or Pledge of the Soul, or of eternal and heavenly things, only makes or is properly called an Oath, when it is applied to, or offered, or

given for temporal and earthly Matters: Obſerve, That an Oath, according to the Apoſtle in *Heb.* 6. 16. is ſuch a Bond as is made by a greater; which, conſequently may not be ſo when made by a leſſer. Therefore, the ſame kind of Speech or Expreſſions, that are an Oath, being made by a greater, may not ſo be when made by a leſſer; as by theſe following Inſtances.

Firſt, *The calling God to Witneſs*, to bind any Affirmation, Promiſe or Denial, eſpecially when relating to temporal and leſſer Matters, moſt underſtanding Men, and eſpecially the Learned, in moſt Ages, accounted it an Oath; but the calling a Man to Witneſs to any Matter or Fact, or to any Affirmation, Promiſe or Denial; who counts it a Swearing? Or that one Swear by the Man ſo called?

Secondly, To ſay, *So do God to me, and more alſo* if I do not ſuch a thing, is an Oath, 2 *Sam.* 3. 35. But to ſay to a Man, So do thou to me and more alſo, if I do not ſuch a thing, who will account it an Oath by the Man?

Thirdly, To ſay, *Our Life for yours* I will do ſuch a thing, is an Oath, *Joſh* 2. 14, 17, 20. But for one to ſay, My Horſe for thine I will do ſuch a thing; who will ſay that ſuch an one Swears by his Horſe? Except any will ſay, That every one that lays a Wager always Swears by the Wager that he lays.

Hence

Hence may be ſeen that a temporal Surety and Security is only proper for temporal Matters, and ſuch a Bond or Security is not accounted an Oath; but whatſoever is higher, as things of a divine and eternal Nature, are too high and great to be offered for a Surety and Security for temporal and earthly Things; and therefore ſuch an extraordinary Bond or Security for ſuch an improper uſe is accounted, and properly called an Oath.

Therefore, according to the definition and nature of an Oath, before mentioned, *The invoking or calling God for a Witneſs, and many other high Expreſſions of the Apoſtle's, that he uſed only in treating of divine Matters; and indeed the appealing (after any manner) to God as Judge, or any ways uſing his ſacred Name, or mentioning any thing whereby it may be imployed, as by Heaven, Earth, &c. being only deſigned for a further ſtrengthning and confirming the Truth of any Speech, Affirmation, Promiſe or Denial, when relating only to humane, worldly and inferiour Matters, may be granted to be an Oath*; but otherwiſe not ſo, when uſed only upon a divine and religious Account. For the ſame Words and Expreſſions, either ſuch as are found in the Scriptures, or others that are commonly uſed in ſome Caſes, which are good and lawful in themſelves, when rightly

uſed, may be an Oath or no Oath, according to their application, deſign and intent in uſing them; as will further appear by the Inſtances, Reaſons and Demonſtrations following.

1. If one ſhould ſay in Prayer, So help me God, that I may walk in thy ways; here the words [So help me God] who will ſay are an Oath? But when theſe words [So help me God] are uſed to bind or confirm any Speech, or the truth thereof, in humane and temporal Affairs, they make up the common National Oath, for Jury-men, Witneſſes, *&c.*

2. Likewiſe if one ſhould ſay (religiouſly ſpeaking) *By Chriſts Blood* the Saints are juſtified, or *By Chriſts Life* they are ſaved, *Rom.* 5. 9, 10. Who will ſay, That there is the leaſt Sign of any thing of the nature of an Oath in theſe Affirmations, or in them words ſouſed? But if any one ſhould uſe theſe words [*By Chriſts Blood*] or [*By Chriſts Life*] in Affirmation or Denying, or in promiſing any thing relating to humane, worldly or temporal Matters; it would amount to an Oath of an high degree, or of the worſt ſort, that would be very irkſome and burthenſome for all ſober and religious Perſons to hear.

3. Alſo

3. Alſo, if one ſhould ſay ſimply, in a religious and ſerious manner, upon ſome good occaſion, *By God I am ſtill alive* and enjoy my health (meaning by his Power, Favour or Mercy) who will account this an Oath? But if a Drunkard or common Swearer ſhould uſe theſe very words in his uſual manner of Speaking, when only to confirm the truth of his Speech; or in his accuſtomed manner of Swearing, and expreſs all the ſame Sentence too; would not all that ſhould hear him, grant that he Swore by his Maker, that he was ſtill alive and enjoyed his health?

4. To ſay or religiouſly to affirm, *As the Lord liveth* he will preſerve thoſe that fear his Name, and continually truſt in him from the ſnares of the evil one; who will acccount it an Oath? But for one to ſay, affirm or promiſe, any thing relating to humane and temporal Matters, in this manner; As the Lord liveth ſuch a thing is, or ſhall be done, *&c.* is called an Oath; as is manifeſt in 1 *Sam.* 19. 6, 20. 3. and 28. 10. and alſo in *Jer.* 38. 16.

5. To aſſert or promiſe any thing, by the words [*God is my Witneſs or Record*] when it relates only to humane and temporal Matters, and to ſatisfie ſuch incredulity or diſtruſt, that will be content with no leſs ſecurity than by the Name of God, may be an Oath,

Oath, becauſe his Name is here mentiond and uſed as a Bond or Surety for an earthly and inferior Matter; but for one ſenſibly and ſincerely to ſay, God is my Witneſs or Record that I have lived in his fear; who can account it an Oath?

6. Though the Apoſtle *Paul, Called God for a Record upon his Soul*, to confirm his Aſſertion of ſparing the Brethren, being in ſome divine and religious reſpect, as ſeems manifeſt in the next Chapter, and therefore might not then be an Oath in the Apoſtle: Yet what good Chriſtians, in imitation of theſe words, durſt promiſe or ſay in any thing relating to common and humane Affairs, I call God for a Record upon my Soul, that I will do, or I will not perform, ſuch a thing; would not this be as great an Oath, as if he had inſtead thereof uſed the words [As the Lord liveth] or the words [So help me God?]

7. Likewiſe, though the Apoſtle's ſaying, Now the things which I write unto you, *Behold, before God, I lie not*, might not be an Oath in the Apoſtle, becauſe he treated and wrote of religious and divine Things, in which reſpect Gods Name, and the appealing to him too, may be lawfully uſed by ſincere Chriſtians, in many Caſes: As for Inſtance, one may truly ſay, I ſpeak or do a thing before,

fore, or in the preſence of God, if he be then livingly ſenſible thereof to aſſiſt him in the performing it; yet if another ſhould ſpeak the ſame words, that was not livingly ſenſible of his preſence at that time, he would Speak (if not Swear) falſly, as well as he that ſaid, The Lord liveth (when he was not ſenſible thereof) Swore falſly; though the Lord liveth, is as true in it ſelf, as that nothing can be ſpoken or done but it muſt be ſo before God, as that it cannot be hid from his Preſence. And, further, for one to promiſe or ſay, Before God, I will pay thee that Mony; or, Before God, I will not ſtay here; who will not account either of theſe Expreſſions to be an Oath?

And, moreover, it may be obſerved, that being the Apoſtle uſed the word [behold] before the words [before God] and which, in the Greek, is without any Point or Comma after the word ἰδὲ, for behold, and hath alſo the word ὅτι ſignifying becauſe, or that, which is omitted in the Engliſh, as ἰδὲ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι οὐ ψεύδομαι. This Expreſſion may be tranſlated or underſtood in a moderater ſenſe than it is commonly taken in the Engliſh; as, Behold, before God, that I do not lie or ſpeak falſe; as much as to ſay, I do not ſpeak falſe in theſe things I write unto you, becauſe I am now ſenſibly before, or in the pre-

Preſence of God, and therefore I cannot miſtake (or be diſappointed in the truth thereof, as the Greek word ψεύδεται may alſo ſignifie) at ſuch a time. And let it be further conſidered, that to uſe the words [before God] to promiſe any humane, terrene or earthly Matter by, cannot be lawful or ſafe, in any ſenſe however; for in the firſt place, altho' a Chriſtian may ſometimes ſay, or hath truly uſed them words in the Preſent and Preter Tenſe; yet who can appoint a time in the future, when he will approach to, or be ſenſibly before God, to perform any humane Matter in his preſence? And if in ſaying, Before God I will perform ſuch a Matter, could be only underſtood in ſuch a common ſenſe, as that all things are and muſt be performed before him, becauſe nothing can be hid from his preſence, it would be ſuperfluous and uſing his Name in vain; becauſe nothing can be done, but it muſt be before him; as well the breaking of the Promiſe, as the performing it: Or if ſuch a Senſe be excluded (the poſſibility of which is not eaſily to be conceived) whereby God is appealed to, or invoked to take notice thereof, as a Judge, and ſo conſequently as a juſt Revenger, in caſe of non-performance of the Matter promiſed, which is of the nature of an Oath; to what purpoſe would it be for any one to

uſe

uſe or require ſuch words for a ſtrengthning or confirming the ſaid Promiſe? So by this Reaſon alſo it would be an uſing or taking God's Name in vain.

8. And alſo, though the Apoſtle *Paul* in *Rom.* 9. 3. after having juſt before mentioned his godly Sorrow and Exerciſe for the *Iſraelites*, &c. ſaid, I could wiſh my ſelf Accurſed from Chriſt for my Brethren, *&c.* Yet what good Chriſtian durſt imitate or uſe theſe words of the Apoſtle, in ſuch a different ſenſe as he uſed them, as to wiſh himſelf Accurſed from Chriſt to confirm the truth of any Affirmation or Promiſe, and moſt eſpecially when relating to humane and temporal Affairs? And if any one ſhould promiſe or ſay, I wiſh my ſelf Accurſed from Chriſt, if I ſpeak falſe, or if I do not perform ſuch a thing; what ſort of Oaths would any ſincere Chriſtian count worſer than ſuch an Expreſſion, though the Party ſhould excuſe himſelf, by improperly pleading the Apoſtle's Example for it, as before-mentioned?

So it is plain, from what hath been before-mentioned, That we are not to imitate the Apoſtles in any ſuch extraordinary Expreſſions, nor yet in every particular and extraordinary thing they might ſay or do, except upon ſuch like occaſion, and that we had the ſame Authority or Permiſſion, or a Command

mand or Precept therefore; for we are only to imitate and be Followers of them, and all Chriſtians one of another, in all ſuch general Duties, as is plain we are all alike commanded by our, and their Lord and Maſter, and not otherwiſe: For becauſe one Chriſtian has a Gift and Command to Preach, it doth not therefore follow, that all other Chriſtians muſt imitate him and be Preachers too; nor becauſe another may have a Gift of Propheſying, it will not follow, that all the reſt muſt be Propheſiers too, by only imitating him.

But to come cloſer to the Matter ſtill, if poſſible, and to anſwer the moſt critical Objections as may or can be: If any would yet imitate any of the ſaid Apoſtles Expreſſions, in their Epiſtles, and uſe Gods ſacred Name for a Witneſs to, or a Confirmation of any thing; ſurely they ought to do it in the like Caſes and Senſe, and by the ſame Spirit and Authority, as the Apoſtles did, and wrote their Epiſtles in; or elſe it cannot have the ſame approbation and acceptance (ſeeing Gods Name may be uſed amiſs and in vain) but the contrary.

As for Example, Would it not be a preſumption, for any Man, to Call or Summons an earthly King for a Witneſs or as a Surety, to any of the Man's own particular and trivial

vial Cauſes? Yet if the ſame King ſhould commiſſionate or require any of his Subjects, to call him for a Witneſs or to be a Security for a thing, wherein the King's Cauſe is chiefly concerned; it would be then no preſumption in a Subject ſo to do.

And, furthermore, ſeeing, according to ſeveral expreſs Scriptures, that none can Worſhip (or Adore or Reverence, according to the Greek) God aright without his Spirit, *Joh.* 4. 23, 24. Nor can any ask or pray, as they ought, except in Chriſt's Name or by the Spirits help, *Joh.* 14. 13, 14. *Rom.* 8. 26, 27. No, nor yet ſo much as to truly ſay, that Jeſus is the Lord (though nothing is more true in it ſelf) without the Holy Ghoſt (or Spirit) 1 *Cor.* 12. 3. How can any, conſidering theſe things (that profeſs either the Scriptures or the Spirit, to be their Guide or Rule) invoke God for a Witneſs, or any other purpoſe, or any ways to imploy and uſe his Sacred Name for a Security in earthly Matters, if it was not a proper Oath (which is more than barely to ask a Petition in Prayer) in their own time? Or at the requirings of others, without they certainly know that they have his Commiſſion or the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit at the time, to perform it rightly, and with ſuch due reverence as they ought? For if none can approach

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Gods preſence to worſhip him, or ſo much as to ask a Petition in Prayer, with a fit or due Adoration or Reverence, without Chriſt's Name or Authority, or the Spirit's aſſiſtance; much more can any invoke God into their preſence for a Witneſs or Surety, *&c.* with a ſufficient Adoration or Reverence, without his Commiſſion or the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit; for who are ſo bold, as peremptorily to approach the preſence of, or ſpeak to an earthly Prince, without his permiſſion firſt obtained, or ſome one to introduce him, or to mediate for him? Much more, how dare any to invoke God into their preſence, upon any account, when they pleaſe, and at any time appointed by Man, without firſt having obtained a divine Permiſſion, or being required thereto by his Spirit?

Therefore, from hence it is evidently plain and clear, That we ought to have a care of uſing any other form or higher manner of Expreſſions for aſſerting the truth, and promiſing any thing in all Caſes, eſpecially relating to temporal Matters, but what may plainly agree with Chriſt's Precept or form of Speech, which he preſcribed and commanded us to uſe inſtead of an Oath, *Mat.* 5. 37. *viz.* That our Word or Speech be Yea, yea; and Nay, nay (as is according to the Greek) which ſeems to be only a doubling of ſuch

ſuch words that we commonly uſe for affirming or denying of a thing, as Chriſt himſelf often did, when he ſaid, Verily, verily, leſt we ſhould run into an Oath unawares, or ſo far as to uſe or take God's Name in vain (that is not to be uſed cuſtomarily or formally) or at leaſt into any thing which Chriſt counted was more or higher than Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; and ſaid, cometh of evil: Not but that I believe we may uſe other Words or Expreſſions for Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; that are equivalent thereunto, as truly or verily, or ſuch like, for Yea and Amen are the ſame, 2 *Cor.* 1. but not ſuch as are higher; for Chriſt's ſaying, Whatſoever are more (or more full according to the Greek) than theſe, cometh of evil, ſeems plainly to intimate that there may be other Expreſſions higher than theſe, though not in the Superlative Degree, that are dangerous to uſe (if they can be leſſer than an Oath) or elſe why did Chriſt, here only, forbid what is in the Comparative Degree to Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; after he had forbidden what was in the Superlative Degree before in Verſe 34. when he forbad all Oaths?

Now for a further Confirmation of all theſe Reaſons and Demonſtrations aforementioned, ſee what ſeveral of the moſt learned, famous and eminent Fathers, Doctors, Chriſtians and Martyrs, in divers and former Ages, have ſaid and believed concerning the ſame; and eſpecially that we ſhould not go higher, or exceed Chriſt's Evangelical Sentence of Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; in all Caſes where Oaths are required.

1. S*Imocratus* Epiſt. 33. F. ſaith, "Strange, "that faithful Yea and Nay is ſtopt, "when Perfidiouſneſs, with an Oath, can "paſs all Guards, Courts and Offices.

Obſervation, Here this Author believed, That Yea and Nay was ſufficient to be taken, in all Caſes, inſtead of an Oath.

2. *Tertul. de Idololatria*, Cap. 11. "He 'which ſigns a Bill of Security, containing 'and confirmed by an Oath, is guilty of 'Swearing as if he had ſpoken it.

Obſerv.

Obſerv. Here this learned Author eſteem'd a Swearer guilty of ſomething, which ſurely muſt be evil, and withal in ſuch neceſſary Caſes, as Bills of Security; tho' the Perſon himſelf ſpoke not one Word, nor yet writ one Syllable of the Oath therein contained; but only inſtead thereof ſet his Name to the Bill.

3. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* Lib. 7. " It ſufficeth " to add unto his Affirming or Denying this, " *viz.* I ſpeak truly, That he begets Faith " in them who perceiveth not the ſtability " of his Anſwer.

Obſerv. Here is the utmoſt Confirmation that the Author allows, and that only to ſuch as may not at firſt perceive the Truth, and not to gratify ſuch as queſtions it meerly from incredulity and diſtruſt.

4. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* Lib. 7. " Neither " doth he Swear, as being one who hath de- " termined to put for his affirming Yea, and " for his denying Nay.

Obſerv. Here alſo the ſame Author counts Yea and Nay ſufficient, inſtead of Swearing.

5. *Athanaſius*, on the Paſſion of Chriſt, ſaith, " The Evangelical Sentence of the " Lord is, Let your Yea be Yea, and your " Nay, Nay; thus far we, who are in Chriſt, " may confirm our words with Aſſeverati- " ons; and with no further Progreſs let us " flee to, or approach Oaths.

Obſerv. What can be ſaid plainer againſt riſing higher, or uſing any greater Aſſeveration than Yea, yea; and Nay, nay, inſtead of Oaths?

6. Again, by the ſame learned and eminent Author on the ſame Subject; " If, therefore, " he that Swears hath Faith and Truth; " what uſe is there of an Oath? But if he " hath no Faith nor Truth; why do we un- " dertake ſuch an Impiety, that for poor " ſilly Men, and theſe Mortal too, we call " to witneſs God, that is above Men? For " if it be a baſe part to call to witneſs an " Earthly King, to the loweſt Judicature, as " one that is greater than both Actors and " Judges; why do we cite him that is un- " created to created things, and make God " to be deſpiſed of Men? hout. that exceeds " all Iniquity and Audacioufneſs; what then " is to be done? *No more*, but that our Yea " be Yea, and our Nay be Nay; and, in " ſhort, that we do not lie. *Ob-*

Obſerv. Here are eminent Reaſons againſt all Swearing, and the neceſſity thereof; as well for ſuch as cannot be believed and truſted, as for thoſe that can, though in Courts of Judicature: And, likewiſe, againſt the uſing God's ſacred Name for a Surety, *&c.* in human Affairs: And, alſo, againſt exceeding or going beyond the ſimplicity of Yea, yea; and Nay, Nay; in all humane Caſes and Affairs.

7. *Hillary*, on *Mat.* 5. 34. "Faith doth "remove the cuſtom of an Oath, making the "buſineſſes of our Life to be determined in "Truth, and laying aſide the affecting to "deceive, preſcribing the ſimplicity of "Speaking and Hearing, that what was, was, "and what was not, was not that the buſi-"neſs of deceiving might be apparent be-"tween it is, and it is not; and what is more "is all of evil.

Obſerv. Here this Author holds, That Faith preſcribes the ſimplicity of Speaking and Hearing, for determining the buſineſſes of our Life; and what is more than ſuch ſimplicity, he counts to be all of evil. Therefore, whom ought Chriſtians to follow or imitate; Faith, that preſcribed ſuch ſimplicity; or Infidelity and Diſtruſt, that at firſt,

inſtead thereof, preſcribed (or was the cauſe of preſcribing) Oaths?

8. *Chryſoſtom*, on *Mat.* Hom. 17. "Then "verily, when they appeared unfaithful, "they called God to witneſs, as giving a "Surety for ſecurity for their words; for "an Oath is a Suretyſhip, where their Be-"haviours have no truſt or credit. And be-"cauſe Men ſo little truſt one another, they "ſeek God for a Surety; not Man. Secondly, "he is in the ſame Crime who receives an "Oath, if he draws God to be a Surety for "Contracts, and ſay, that he will not truſt "except he have him. *Oh monſtrous thing!* "Oh ſhameful Diſgrace! Thou a Worm, "Duſt and Aſhes, and a Vapour, dareſt thou "ſnatch thy Lord, who art ſuch an one, "for a Surety, and compelleſt to accept "him?

Obſerv. Here this eminent Author, whom, and whoſe Authority the Martyrs often quoted and uſed, ſhews the danger of uſing or invoking (or as he calls it ſnatching) God's ſacred Name for a Surety, *&c.* in humane Affairs, as well to ſuch as require it, as to t o'e that ſo do it.

9. Fur-

9. Further, by the Author in the ſame Diſcourſe, " Ye know not what God is, " and with what Mouth he ought to be in- " vocated. But now we vainly diſtract that " honourable Name, which is a Name above " every Name, which is wonderful in all the " Earth, which the Devils hearing, do trem- " ble at; *Oh moſt contemptible Cuſtom*, which " hath done that! Ought not one even to " dread, when God is named? But even a- " mong the Jews this Name was ſo Reve- " verend, that it was written on the Plate " of the Mitre, and none might bear theſe " Letters of the Name of God, but only the " High Prieſt: And now, alſo, we bear his " Name tenderly. If it was not lawful for " all to name God ſimply; how great Auda- " cioufneſs is it to call it in witneſs?

Obſerv. Now let all conſider what Reaſons here are; that with what Mouth, and with what extraordinary Fear and Reverence God's Name ought to be uſed, in any reſpect, which ſurely can never rightly be done by thoſe that have no Faith or Credit; nor yet by all that are or may be required to uſe it in humane and earthly Affairs. Therefore, from hence may be ſeen an invincible Reaſon againſtall Swearing, and the naming or uſing God's ſacred Name any ways, to confirm the

truth of any Speech relating to humane and worldly Matters. As for such as are true Men, and dare not lie, there is no need of any more than a simple affirming or denial; and therefore Swearing, and also the using of God's sacred Name, must consequently be in vain, which all Christians will grant ought not to be; and for those Men as are false, and that their simple Assertion cannot be believed; such are not worthy to have God's Name in their Mouths.

10. Likewise, still further, by the same Author; "Tell me now if any should call "down an Angel from Heaven, and tell him, "That he must stand and hear our Sermons, "as if he must be thereby instructed; would "it not be a ridiculous and confused "thing?

Observ. Here is a comparison against applying superiour things to earthly and inferiour uses.

11. Also, again, by the same Author; "Do not use thy Mouth to Swear, nor be "familiar with the holy Name.

Observ. Here is a pretty Caution against using God's sacred Name in common and earthly

earthly Affairs; becauſe it is too great to be uſed ſo commonly and familiarly.

12. *Jerom* on *Jer.* 4. Book 1. Chap. 3. " And what is ſaid in the old Teſtament? " The Lord liveth is an Oath, to the con- " demning of all the Dead, by whom all Ido- " latry Sweareth.

Obſerv. Here the words [the Lord liveth] as they were uſed in the old Teſtament, in temporal Matters, is counted an Oath by this learned Expoſitor.

13. *Theophylact.* on *Mat.* 5. ſaith, " To " Swear or adjure more to Yea and Nay, is " of the Devil.

Obſerv. Here's a Reproof for ſuch as cannot be content with the ſimplicity of Yea and Nay.

14. *Janſenius* on *Mat.* 5. ſaith, " Yea and " Amen are the ſame, 2 *Cor.* 1. not Swear- " ing but Affirming.

Obſerv. Here's an Authority, that Amen or Verily is but equivalent to Yea; and ſo, therefore, may be uſed inſtead of an Oath.

Euthyr-

Euthymius Zagabonus, on *Mat.* 5. Page 43. ſaith, " But let your Words be Yea, yea; " and Nay, nay; *&c.* Let your Speech be, " when you affirm, Yea; and when you de- " ny, Nay; and uſe only theſe for, or in- " ſtead of Oaths, to Confirmation, and no " other than Yea and Nay: What is adjoyn- " ed beſides theſe he calleth an Oath.

Obſerv. Here this Expoſitor is very ſtrict for the ſimplicity of Yea and Nay, and thinks that Chriſt eſteemed any thing, which is added beyond that, to be an Oath.

16. *J. Fox, Marty.* V. 3. p. 910, 911. *Elizabeth Young* ſaid, " I underſtand not what an " Oath is, and therefore I will take no ſuch " thing upon me. And in Anſwer to the " Biſhop about it, ſaid, Chriſt ſaith, That " whatever is more than Yea, yea; and " Nay, and Nay; it cometh of evil.

Obſerv. Here this ſincere Chriſtian, becauſe, not underſtanding the extent of Oaths, dare venture no further than Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; whatever ſhe ſuffered therefore, which ſhe then run the hazard of.

17. *Eraſmus* on *Mat.* 5. " Two words " be ſufficient, Nay and Yea; whereby " thou

" thou denieſt that which thou doſt not
" promiſe, and whereby thou doſt perform
" that which thou didſt promiſe by plain
" word, that thou wouldſt do; if there be
" any more, beſides theſe, it muſt needs
" come of Evil and Sin:

Obſerv. Here is this learned Man's Judgment of the ſufficiency of Nay and Yea, and of the danger of exceeding them.

18. *Jacobus Faber* on *Mat* 5. Pag. 23, 24.
" Unto true Men, it's ſufficient that a
" true Man gain belief, if he ſay, that
" the Lord hath commanded Yea, yea,
" in affirming, Nay, nay, in denying.
" Who ever ſpoke more ſeriouſly than our
" Saviour? Whom more neceſſary things?
" Yet he never uſed other Speech, than that
" Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, or ſome
" other ſuch like; which was a true form
" or manner to them that Swore not.

Obſerv. Here this Author is plain concerning what we may only uſe inſtead of an Oath.

19. Again, further, by the ſame Author;
" If it be manifeſt that he that is called in-
" to Judgment be verily good and true, it
" is

" is enough to hear of him, Yea or Nay
" but if that be not evident, or that it b
" evident that he is bad, perhaps that's re
" quired of him which ought not to be re
" quired.

Obſerv. Here's another Teſtimony of th ſufficiency of Yea and Nay, inſtead of a Oath, to a true Man; and the danger of re quiring more, though from one that is eithe doubtful or apparently falſe.

20. *Suarez. De quæſt. Jur. Chriſt.* p. 276 ſaid, " Grant this were poſſible to bring
" God for a Witneſs (which this Autho
" queſtioned) it ſeems diſorderly to bring
" the Perſon of God to confirm Mens buſi
" neſſes, Covenants or Words; becauſe i
" is diſorderly to order things of an highe
" Order, to thoſe that are inferiour: Much
" *more* is it diſorderly to mix the ſacred Au
" thority of God to the prophane, or com
" mon Words and Buſineſs of Men.

Obſerv. Here is a notable Teſtimony a gainſt uſing God's ſacred Name to confirm humane and temporal Affairs.

21. *Joac. Camer.* and *P. Loſeler. Villerius's* Marginal Note upon *Mat.* 5. 37. " What
" ſoeve

" ſoever you vouch, vouch it barely; and " whatſoever you deny, deny it barely, " without any more words.

Obſerv. Here is another Teſtimony for the keeping to the ſimplicity of equivalency of Speech to Yea, yea; and Nay, nay.

22. Biſhop *Uſher*, " If the Queſtion be " weighty, whether (ſaith the Biſhop) the " Doubt may be ended with Truly or Ve- " rily; or doubtingly, with Verily, Verily, " as Chriſt did for you, by his Example, " we ought to forbear an Oath, *Mat.* 5. " 37.

Obſerv. See here the utmoſt that this learned and eminent Biſhop allows to be uſed inſtead of an Oath, although in doubtful Caſes.

23. *Biſhop Gauden*, in his Diſcourſe for ſolemn Swearing, ſays or confeſſes thus much, " That the ancient Chriſtians and " Fathers, *&c.* (refuſing to Swear) ſaid to " the Heathen, *Chriſtianus Sum*, I am a " Chriſtian; to each other Yea, yea; Nay, " nay; thereby keeping up the Sanctity and " Credit of their Profeſſion.

Obſerv.

Obſerv. Then it is plain, thoſe that have went, or ſhall go beyond this ſimplicity of Yea, yea; and Nay, Nay; did, or muſt, decline from the Sanctity and Credit of the Profeſſion of the Primitive Chriſtians.

24. " There was a People in the City " of *Middleburgh* that could not Swear at " all, called the Meniſts; who profered " to the then Grave of *Naſſau*, and Prince of " *Orange*, that their Yea might paſs for an " Oath; and it was granted them in the " year, 1577.

Obſerv. See here, that theſe conſcientious People profered no further than the ſimplicity of their Yea, *&c.* to be taken inſtead of an Oath.

So now, conſidering the demonſtrative Reaſons, and the many Authorities aforementioned, ſo wonderfully concurring to the ſame thing; with what face or pretence can any, that ſincerely profeſs Chriſtianity, take any Oath? Or uſe any higher Expreſſions, for confirming humane and temporal Matters, than Chriſt's Evangelical Sentence of Yea, yea; and Nay, Nay; or what is equivalent thereto? And what Chriſtian Men, or Magiſtrates, or Powers of the Earth, can law-

awfully prescribe or require more than Christ hath permitted herein? And who can undertake or pretend to prescribe a better form of Words or Expression, than Christ hath prescribed and allowed us, by his Command and Example, to be used instead of an Oath?

And if Christ hath not limited us thereby to them bare words, or to that particular form of Speech, yet surely he has to a degree of Speech in our affirming or denying, beyond which, to be sure, Christians ought not to go. But I think it is much easier, as well as safer, for them, to practise that or such like forms as Christ hath left us, than it will be to fix and agree to Overpluses.

Here

Here follow a few Lines, by way of Poſtſcript, from one that took a ſhort view of this Treatiſe; which I thought meet alſo to Inſert.

I Have taken a ſhort view of this Manuſcript, with the Authorities therein quoted, and it ſeems to me highly to favour the Doctrin of the People called QUAKERS, who have been, and are, expoſed to great Sufferings, for their refuſing to Swear in any Caſe; however, let none, therefore, ſlight the Authorities, Arguments and Reaſons therein urged, but rather, by ex-

expreſs Scripture, without undue Conſequences and corrupt Meanings diſprove; for how mean ſoever the Inſtruments are that God makes uſe of, they are not to be ſlighted; for the Aſs was made to rebuke, with Man's Voice, the Prophets madneſs, and then ſaw more than he did, and all his Blows could not get him forward; and the Reaſon you know was, he ſaw the Angel of the Lord with a drawn Sword in his Hand. And, notwithſtanding, the Sufferings that the QUAKERS have been, and are expoſed to, and the Laws that on this foot have been made againſt them; yet who can get them any further than a bare affirming or denying, becauſe of Chriſt's Precept and his Apoſtles? And although they uſe the Name of God, and thoſe very words in a religious way, which makes up the common and formal Oaths, yet are very cautious of making uſe of that ſacred Name in their worldly or temporal Affairs; and urging, that none can

call Jeſus Lord, but by the Holy Ghoſt
And I have heard they have been ver
ſollicitous to the Government, to hav
their ſolemn Words taken inſtead o
an Oath, upon ſubjecting to the ſam
Puniſhment or Penalties that's du
to Perjured Perſons, if they affirm o
deny falſly, which to me indeed ſeem
very reaſonable to be granted them on
thoſe Terms: Although I have heard
the Government are for obliging them
to ſome Form of Speech in their ſolemn
Affirmations, wherein the Name of
God is made uſe of, as theſe or the like
words, *viz.* [before] [in the preſence]
of God, which the tendency of this
Treatiſe ſeems not to allow in any tem-
poral Affair, without a particular Com-
mand; and likewiſe to exclude that,
becauſe it ſo ſtrictly contends for the
literal Senſe of *Mat.* 5. *Jam.* 5. That
its not reaſonable to conclude, that God
will give a Command to any, to con-
tradict his own Son's poſitive Precept.
Upon the whole, I muſt confeſs, The
plain and ſimple way of affirming or

deny-

denying hath a tendency to advance the Repute of the Christian Religion; and this Cautiousness of making use of the reverent Name of God in temporal Affairs, if duly observed, would be a good step to put a stop to the breach of that Command, which forbids taking his Name in vain; though that may be done, and is too much in Matters relating to spiritual Things, as well as temporal; and if once People were come to God's Spirit, and its Leadings in all things, as their Phrases are, they would not take his Name in vain, in any wise.

And for those that look upon themselves concerned to stand firm in this Testimony, and most clear and strict to the literal Sense thereof, it's certain that not to make use of Phrases or Words [before, or in the sight, or presence of God] or to name God at all, is most likely to keep clear from that which is more than Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; and cometh of evil; for if once it be allowed, that the Name of God may be made use of in affirming or denying,

or

or binding the truth of our Words about any temporal Matters; how ſhall we be able to diſtinguiſh what is more than Yea, yea; and Nay, nay; that cometh of evil, and what is not? For if I ſay in Evidence, in relation to ſuch an Affair [before God, or ſo help me God, in the Sight or Preſence of God] this is true or falſe; what do I leſs than Swear, and imply, by ſuch a Speech, God ſhould judge, condemn or puniſh me, if what I affirm be not true? And wherefore do I uſe it, but to beget a greater Credit to what I ſay, by making uſe of his Name that is greater than my ſelf? Which, as the Apoſtle ſaid, is the manner of thoſe that Swear, to Swear by the greater, *Heb.* 6. 16.

Vale.

FINIS.

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